

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

REPORT OF THE IMAGERY MANAGEMENT PANEL:

SECRETARIAL STUDY

APRIL 1977

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I. Executive Summary

The Imagery Management Panel has completed its study of the status of secretarial/clerical personnel within NPIC. Through the use of a questionnaire, the Panel attempted to identify problem areas as well as positive factors concerning this integral part of the workforce. After analyzing the results of the questionnaire, the Panel suggests the following key recommendations be implemented to enhance the overall secretarial/clerical field within the Center.

1. Refresher training in shorthand be provided by the Center to meet Agency standards.
2. New Clericals be temporarily assigned to the senior secretary of the component for initial procedural training.
3. Expansion of the EOD-type briefings and courses be presented to Center clericals.
4. Job descriptions of the Center's clericals be reviewed for completeness and accuracy and be updated if necessary. Each clerical should then be provided with a copy of his job description.
5. Reclassifying or retitling and upgrading of two secretarial positions in each Group.
6. Center's New Supervisors' Course include instruction on the proper utilization of clerical employees' skills.
7. Duplicating needs be reevaluated, and sufficient copy machines be distributed to meet the needs of the Center.
8. Supervisors take an active interest in coordinating a career development plan with their secretaries.
9. Center encourage all clericals to participate in the activities of the NPIC Clerical Working Group.

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II. Method of Information Gathering and Handling

The Imagery Management Panel secretary questionnaire consisted of 78 questions covering a wide range of factors and interests. For the purpose of analysis the questions were subdivided into seven subject areas. These subject areas are:

- A. GENERAL INFORMATION
- B. SKILLS AND TRAINING
- C. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- D. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS
- E. WORKING ENVIRONMENT
- F. CAREER DEVELOPMENT
- G. ATTITUDES, MORALE, INTEREST AND RECOGNITION

The above subject areas are not mutually exclusive and therefore there is some overlap between subject areas. We also found on further examination that several questions were confusing or redundant. These unsatisfactory questions have been eliminated from our analysis.

Many of the responses represent secretaries' perceptions and, therefore, the Panel did not interpret them as fact. When 25% or more of the responses identified a common condition, however, the Panel considered this to be a significant response warranting our close examination.

Statistics and narrative comments were analyzed by major groups within the Center as well as Center totals. If a problem or condition appears to be limited to one group, it is so noted. If not stated to the contrary, the percentage statistics or other data refer to all the respondents collectively. For the purpose of this study the major Center groups are Imagery Exploitation Group (IEG), Priority Exploitation Group (PEG), Production Services Group (PSG), Technical Services Group (TSG), and Support Staff and Office of the Director (SS-OD). Of the 91 questionnaires distributed, 61, or 67% of the questionnaires, were returned to the Panel. The number of participants from each group are as follows: IEG-24, PEG-1, PSG-19, TSG-8, and SS-OD-9.

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Each subject area has been treated in four sections. The first section is the initial IMP overview of the subject area. Section two is a listing of pertinent questions dealing with that particular area of interest. Section three consists of the IMP analysis of the subject area. Section four comprises IMP recommendations and conclusions. Our evaluations are based on three sources of information; statistical results of the questionnaire, narrative comments attached to the questionnaire by the respondents, and our own experiences. [redacted] secretary to the Chief of Support Staff, performed an invaluable service as a consultant.

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## III. Response to Secretarial Study Questionnaire

## A. GENERAL INFORMATION

## 1. IMP Overview

With this series of questions we wanted to establish a baseline or composite of background information on the respondents. We wanted to determine the variety and depth of experience as well as the educational level of the secretaries. This information is intended to provide a frame of reference and perspective for further analysis of the questionnaire.

## 2. Background Questions and Responses

## #1 How many years have you worked

		(range)	
in the secretarial field	<u>6.3</u>	(2 wks. to 22 yrs.)	
in the Agency	<u>7.0</u>	(3.5 mos. to 22 yrs.)	
in NPIC	<u>5.2</u>	(3.5 mos. to 14 yrs.)	
in your present job	<u>2.7</u>	(2 wks. to 7 yrs.)	

## #2 What was your EOD grade?

	(range)
GS- <u>3.4</u> (GS-02 to GS-05)	

## What is your present grade?

	(range)
GS- <u>6.0</u> (GS-04 to GS-08)	

## #3 What is the grade level of the position you are now holding?

	(range)
GS- <u>6.3</u> (GS-05 to GS-08)	

## #4 How many secretarial positions have you had (including positions outside the Agency)?

	(range)
<u>3.5</u> (1 to 12)	

## #5 Highest level of education attained:

high school graduate	<u>95%</u>	
secretarial school	<u>21%</u>	certificate <u>20%</u>

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1-2 years college	<u>11%</u>
3-4 years college	<u>2%</u>
associate degree	<u>3%</u>
bachelors degree	<u>2%</u>

#6 Have you read the DDS&T Personnel Management Employee Handbook?

YES - 83%

### 3. Background Analysis

For the most part our secretaries are NPIC secretaries. As a group they spent 75% of their Agency careers in the Center and 43% of their secretarial careers in their present job. Most of the secretaries have had the experience of working in other secretarial positions. This varied background provides a legitimate basis for comparison responses to subsequent questions. While Question #5 seems to have been misinterpreted by some respondents, the question does reveal that perhaps as many as one-third of the respondents have training beyond the high school level.

Perhaps the most significant result of this category of questions is a comparison between the present grade of the respondents and the grade level of the position they are holding. On a centerwide basis the present grades are 96% of the potential grades in their current positions. This trend is particularly true in TSG and SS-OD where the figure is 98% of potential. This immediately raises the problem of headroom within the secretarial field. This problem is discussed at some length under the subject areas including Attitudes..., and Career Development.

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B. SKILLS AND TRAINING

1. IMP Overview

We had several objectives in mind as we looked into the area of skills and training. We had already determined in the General Information category that approximately 20% of the secretarial workforce attended secretarial school outside the Agency. Of course that meant that about 80% of our secretaries had little training other than high school level courses and/or on-the-job training.

There seems to be a prevalent attitude throughout the Center and the Agency that the skill level of secretarial/ clerical personnel is quite low. We wanted to determine what skills the secretaries thought were important in performing their jobs and what skills they thought had limited utility. We also wanted to know what the relative level of interest was for pursuing future education and skills training both within and outside the Center.

2. Skills and Training - Questions and Responses

#7 When you were first assigned to a permanent position at NPIC, were you trained for the work

by the person you were replacing	<u>26%</u>
by your supervisor	<u>14%</u>
"on-the-job"	<u>47%</u>
other - explain	<u>12%</u>

#8 What skills do you feel are required to do your job?

Representative answers include:

- typing
- filing
- spelling
- answering the telephone
- dealing with people
- patience
- mail procedures
- use of Xerox
- shorthand
- organizational ability

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#9 Do you feel that you have secretarial skills and training that are not utilized in your present position? If yes, name them.

YES - 55% NO - 45%

Representative answers include:

- shorthand
- computer experience

#10 Do you feel the Agency's internal training courses for secretaries are adequate?

YES - 23% NO - 44%

I don't know what is available 33%

#11 Are you included in NPIC training programs other than secretary related? If yes, which ones?

YES - 38% NO - 62%

Representative answers include:

- courses related to CR duties
- in-house reading program
- geography
- math
- Black history
- orientation

#12 If you had the responsibility and authority to set up a training program for secretaries in NPIC, what would you include?

Representative answers include:

- stenography
- memo format
- files system
- T&A
- time management
- telephone techniques
- forms procedures
- proofreading
- basic grammar

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- reading
- English
- how to accommodate visitors
- basic psychology
- review of NPIC Secretary Handbook
- review of NPIC orientation courses
- public speaking
- destruction of files
- typing
- NPIC training in NPIC procedures

#13 Are you presently taking courses after work?

YES - 35%      NO - 65%

If yes, are the courses in the secretarial field?

YES - 23%      NO - 77%

#14 Are you interested in taking college level courses in order to qualify for a non-secretarial job within the Center?

YES - 71%      NO - 29%

#15 Do you plan to take secretarial or college level courses in the future?

YES - 59%      NO - 22%      Undecided - 19%

#16 Would you like to see some form of full-time or part-time sponsorship for NPIC secretaries at secretarial, business schools, or junior colleges, in the area? Why?

YES - 71%      NO - 24%      Undecided - 5%

Representative responses include:

- It seems unfair that secretaries who make the least amount of money are expected to fund their education.
- To give secretaries more incentive to work harder and more effectively.
- May be incentive, but would over qualify secretaries. If you desire to be a good secretary, you do not need college to perform.

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- Be more convenient for secretaries, probably learn more and take courses for longer periods and learn skills to better themselves.
- To either enhance your secretarial skills, or to educate you for a broader field of employment within the Center.
- I feel this will be my only way to advance.
- Other professionals receive formal training in their job related fields.

### 3. Skills and Training Analysis

Two predominant themes surfaced during our evaluation of the responses to Skills and Training questions. First, there is a strong desire by the secretaries for advanced training and subsequent job enrichment with increased opportunities for advancement. Secondly, and more specifically, the problem of shorthand became evident with many respondents claiming it is an unutilized skill.

#### a. General Training

Almost half of the respondents felt that the Agency's internal training courses for secretaries were not adequate. This is a widely held perception throughout the Agency and OTR is aware of it. OTR has organized a Clerical Training Needs Task Force to look into the scope of training for secretaries to include the need for skills training such as typing and shorthand.

Our Directorate is also very much concerned and actively involved in the problem of training for secretaries. The 1 January 1977 S&T Careerist Newsletter included the following article:

#### TRAINING FOR SECRETARIES

*OTR is currently evaluating two courses which are tailored to the needs of secretaries. One is the "Secretarial Administration Course" which is designed to give secretaries and administrative assistants a better understanding of work planning and organizing*

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(time management, problem solving, and the principles of supervision). In addition, the three-day course includes an overview of the organization and mission of the Agency and the role of the secretary in the management structure. This course is intended for employees in the GS 6-7 range and complements the existing Employee Development Course and the Office Management Seminar. The other new course is a two-day basic orientation of the Agency for the new (e.g., one month after EOD) employee. This course will give secretaries a basic overview of the Agency and the services available here, as well as instruct them in standard office procedures (e.g., correspondence, telephones, security, etc.). Both of the courses are in the pilot stages; if adopted by OTR, they will supplement what training is already available for secretaries. We are still concerned with the lack of basic skills training, especially in stenography, and will continue to press OTR and the Office of Personnel on this issue and that of the stenographic test itself.

Based on the above article it is apparent that progress is being made in the right direction. The problem of stenography, however, remains unsolved. At issue is whether to require a skill in shorthand for advancement, or drop the requirement as it seems to be an unnecessary skill. The Panel recommends that as long as the stenography requirement stands, the Center should provide the necessary training to meet Agency standards. We recommend that refresher training in shorthand be taught by an instructor who would travel from building to building teaching two hour classes of shorthand. It has been indicated to us through the Center's Office of Internal Training that this would serve the Agency's needs realistically and would be cost-effective. Additionally, this type of training would, in the words of one of the respondents, "Uplift employee morale realizing that the Agency is providing a means for self-improvement and taking a sincere interest in career development of its clerical employees."

Agency-wide programs for innovative secretarial training will do much to alleviate the problem

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of general skills training. Many suggested topics for additional secretarial training within the Center are offered in response to Question #12.

It is apparent that NPIC secretarial procedures are believed to be sometimes different than elsewhere in the Agency. The Panel suggests that procedural problems that are unique to NPIC be referred to the NPIC Clerical Working Group. The Clerical Working Group can deal effectively with procedural issues through the use of ad hoc study groups.

b. Initial Training

Related to the NPIC secretarial procedures problem is the problem of the initial training of new clericals. Question #7 points out that almost half of the secretaries learned their new jobs through trial and error, or, "on-the-job." The IMP recommends that new clericals be temporarily assigned to the senior secretary in the Division or Group in which the new clerical will be assigned. The senior secretary will be responsible for the initial secretarial procedures training of the new employee.

Several benefits would accrue through this procedural training on EOD. First, the new clerical would learn the clerical procedures the right way the first time. Secondly, through the resulting standardization of procedures, increased flexibility of clericals within the Division or Group would be achieved. Thirdly, a job enhancement opportunity would be provided for the senior secretary charged with the responsibility for the training.

c. Expanded Internal Training

Up to this point in our evaluation we have been dealing with specific secretarial job-related training. Now we want to examine training in its larger sense - training that contributes to the growth and development - the education of the individual.

The results of Question #11 indicate that over 60% of the respondents felt they were not included in other than secretarial-type training within NPIC.

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This situation seems to reflect a disturbingly common perception of a secretary as an appendage on a typewriter. (More will be said on this subject under the categories of Attitudes and Working Relationships). Many clericals feel they work within the Center but are not really a part of it.

The Panel recommends that a repetition of the EOD building orientation tours and courses be provided for the clericals. These tours and briefings would be much more meaningful after having had some experience within the Center. These tours could be expanded to provide more in-depth knowledge and experience, e.g. actually make identifications on imagery and become familiar with basic photogrammetry methods and equipment. Field trips to other offices and Agencies in the Intelligence Community and/or to nearby military installations would also increase the clericals' understanding and appreciation of the work of the Center. With this type of training the clericals would become more familiar with the terminology and methodology of imagery exploitation and service functions. At the same time, the clericals would hopefully develop a stronger sense of personal worth and identification towards the role of the Center.

d. External Training

Moving beyond the Center now, we recognize that the highest level of training is formal education. A very strong interest for pursuing some level of formal education was expressed by the majority of our respondents. About 70% of those who answered the secretarial questionnaire were interested in some form of sponsorship to enable them to take courses at local schools or colleges.

The Agency already has a policy in effect  on the sponsorship of external training. This sponsorship, subject to several limitations, is intended "to provide the necessary training to develop skills, knowledge, and abilities that will best qualify employees for the performance of official duties."

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Question #14, however, presents a different circumstance concerning academic-type education. About 70% of the respondents indicated a desire to take college level courses in order to qualify for a non-secretarial job within the Center. The survey found that almost three-fourths of those answering this question want to move out of the secretarial field. This number is certainly significant when we consider what it actually seems to indicate about the relative degree of contentment of the clericals in their jobs. Nevertheless, the Directors's Undergraduate Opportunity Program is tailored to the needs of those individuals wishing to move into a professional career field through education. Expressed desires for educational opportunities are admirable but they must be combined with initiative to progress from a thought to a reality.

Programs for educational sponsorship are available for those who are sincere in their desire to advance their education. They need only apply. On the other hand, however, supervisors must make it possible for clericals to take advantage of training and educational opportunities. It is a hardship for an office to function without its regular clerical support. But it is the responsibility of the supervisor, in directing the career development of his personnel, to actively encourage training.

4. Summary of Recommendations and Conclusions

- The Agency's internal training courses for secretaries were perceived to be inadequate for today's secretaries. OTR, through the Clerical Training Needs Task Force, is currently studying this problem.
- The IMP recommends refresher training in shorthand be provided by the Center to meet Agency standards.
- The Panel recommends that secretarial procedural problems that are unique to NPIC be referred to the NPIC Clerical Working Group.

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- We recommend that new clericals be temporarily assigned to the senior secretary of the component for initial procedural training.
- The Panel recommends an expansion of the EOD-type briefings and courses be presented to Center clericals.
- Programs for advanced educational opportunities for secretaries are available.

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C. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. IMP Overview

In this category we were primarily concerned with the actual job of being a secretary in the Center.

We wanted to explore the role of the LOI and formal job description in the day-to-day functioning of an office. It would be interesting to know if there were some semblance between the stated duties and expectations of the job and the work that is actually performed.

Another area we wanted to evaluate concerns one of the most commonly voiced complaints of secretaries - boredom. We wanted to see if there is a basis for this apparent problem through the distribution of the workload.

Still another area to be investigated was the distinction that is often made between a clerical and a secretary. Is there an actual difference between the duties and responsibilities of these two classifications of employee?

Finally, we wanted to determine what additional responsibilities might be added to the list of secretarial duties that would further enhance the position and lead to greater job satisfaction.

2. Duties and Responsibilities - Questions and Responses

A total of 22 questions were presented to the respondents covering the general field of Duties and Responsibilities. Twelve of the more pertinent questions and their answers are presented below.

#17 Do you have a "Letter of Instruction" (LOI)?

YES - 54% NO - 46%

If yes, is it current?

YES - 56% NO - 44%

#18 Does a job description exist for your present position?

YES - 72% NO - 14% Don't know - 14%

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If yes, does the job description accurately reflect the work you do?

YES - 63%      NO - 37%

Do you have a copy?

YES - 26%      NO - 74%

#19 Do you feel you know what your duties and responsibilities are?

YES - 87%      NO - 13%

#20 Are you required to perform duties that you feel are not secretarial?

YES - 32%      NO - 68%

If yes, what are they?

Representative answers include:

- distributing burn bags
- making coffee and getting coffee for bosses several times a day
- CR duties; jobs no one else wants to do
- escort duty for repairmen

#21 Are you expected to correct grammar and spelling of the material you type?

YES - 87%      NO - 13%

Do you feel you should?

YES - 84%      NO - 16%

#22 Are you required to take shorthand dictation?

YES - 24%      NO - 76%

If yes, how many hours per month?

IEG      - 9.4 hours average      PSG      - no reply

TSG      - 22 hours average      SS-OD      - no reply

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#23 Do you often get bored at work? Explain.

YES - 65% NO - 35%

Typical comments included:

- same thing day after day
- no work
- don't like secretarial work
- for long periods have nothing to do but must look busy.
- work is routine with not enough diversified duties.

#24 Do you feel you are over-worked, under-worked, or have a satisfactory amount of work?

- over-worked 22%  
- under-worked 20%  
- satisfactory amount of work 58%

#25 Do you feel the secretarial workload is evenly divided within your Division/Group?

YES - 61% NO - 39%

#26 Do you feel you are delegated responsibility comparable to your ability?

YES - 66% NO - 34%

#27 Do you see any real difference between the duties of a secretary and those of a clerk typist as they are actually performed in NPIC? Please explain.

YES - 29% NO - 71%

Observations from the respondents included:

- no
- grade only

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- secretary here does the work of a clerk-typist
- I am a clerk-typist and doing the work of a secretary
- identical work -- clericals get less money
- only titles differ
- none other than shorthand
- I feel a secretary has more responsibility

#28 Do you feel your present job responsibilities could be enhanced? If so, how?

YES - 51%      NO - 35%      Don't know - 14%

Some suggestions included:

- perform some duties now done by professionals
- assisting the boss more
- do more administrative work
- why more responsibility -- we are not going to get more pay
- by taking shorthand -- earning secretary status
- doing CR work
- only by getting another position

### 3. Duties and Responsibilities Analysis

No surprises surfaced in our examination of secretaries' Duties and Responsibilities. The responses were fairly predictable based on our observations and experience.

#### a. MBO (LOI)

Management by Objective for secretaries appears to have been relatively ignored by supervisors within the Center. Only about half of the secretaries who responded to the questionnaire reported having a Letter of Instruction. Of those having an LOI, only half again report that it is current. Stated negatively, 71% of the respondents either do not have an LOI or do not have a current one.

The LOI can be an effective management tool when it is used properly. It is particularly useful for career planning on a periodic basis. The requirements of MBO cause the supervisor and employee

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to discuss goals on a formalized basis. The supervisor is placed into a position where he must acknowledge the individuality of his secretary or clerk/typist. Together the supervisor and employee can view duties and responsibilities as a dynamic field which can be enhanced to further meet both the individual's and the Center's needs.

The Panel suggests that if MBO and the LOI are to be used throughout the Center they should be used as intended. Supervisors should be encouraged to take an active interest in maintaining current LOI's for all their personnel.

b. Job Descriptions

The area of job descriptions, although less personal than the LOI, also has its place. A total of 87% of the respondents to the questionnaire feel they know what their duties and responsibilities are. This is interesting in light of the fact that only 26% of the secretaries reported having a copy of their job description. In IEG only one secretary reported having a copy of the job description.

Each particular job should have an accurate and specific job description. All the various duties and responsibilities of the clerical should be detailed in this description. The fitness report is based to a great extent and measured against the job description and it should be as complete as possible.

The IMP recommends all job descriptions of the Center's clericals be reviewed for completeness and accuracy and be updated if necessary. Each clerical should then be provided with a copy of his job description.

c. Clerical Titles

Related to the area of job descriptions is the perceived lack of distinction between clerk-typists and secretaries. A total of 71% of the respondents feel there is no real difference between these two jobs as they are actually performed in NPIC. The only specific distinction, brought out in the narrative comments, referred to the shorthand requirement of secretaries. The use of shorthand, however, seems

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to be ever decreasing throughout the Center and the Agency. If a distinction does in fact exist, it should be more clearly defined.

d. Job Satisfaction

Now we want to look at what seems to be a very common problem - boredom. Fully 65% of the respondents claim to often being bored at work. In addressing the boredom problem among secretaries, the Panel considered both the quantity and quality of the secretarial workload.

First we want to look at the quantity of work performed by secretaries. Due to the cyclic nature of much of our work in the Center, we have peaks and troughs in the workload. Inactivity was given as one reason for being bored with the secretarial job. Granted, we have quiet periods in the workload, but only 20% of the respondents feel they are under-worked. Perhaps more significant is the division of work within a component. Almost 40% of those responding to the questionnaire felt the workload was not evenly divided within their Division/Group. This was particularly true of TSG where 71% felt this way.

In looking for a solution to the problem of cyclic workloads, we asked the secretaries if they thought a pooling of clerical resources would help to alleviate the problem. Almost 70% of the respondents did not think a pooling of resources was a good idea. The primary objection to any pooling proposal seems to be the fear of anonymity that the respondents feel would result. (This evidence of a need for recognition on the part of the secretaries is discussed under a separate category.) The Panel, however, can only suggest that clericals informally help each other through the periods of peak workloads. Cooperation and reciprocity should make this course obvious.

The problem of boredom, however, has in the past been associated with slack times in the workload. The Panel does not feel this is the case. As stated earlier, only 20% of the respondents feel they are under-worked. The evidence seems to suggest that the type and quality of work of the secretaries leads to feelings of boredom. When the secretaries

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were asked if their work was interesting, 83% said yes, but, on the other hand, 61% felt their work was not challenging. It is in the area of job challenge that we must deal with the problem of job boredom.

To a great extent the job of a secretary is routine. Much of the average day of a secretary is filled with answering the phone, typing, filing, doing T&A cards, etc. But many of our secretaries are intelligent, skilled, and capable of doing more responsible work. When this routine work is considered in conjunction with the fact that most secretaries have reached the top grade for their slot, frustration and boredom are the results. Under these circumstances the secretaries often find themselves in a state of stagnation. This condition allows for a tremendous waste of potential within the secretarial workforce.

Recognizing that we apparently have a reservoir of untapped potential available, we must now ask if we can realistically offer proposals for the utilization of this secretarial potential. It was encouraging to note that at least 50% of the secretaries who responded to the questionnaire believe their present job responsibilities could be enhanced.

e. Increased Responsibilities

Several positive suggestions for increasing the responsibilities of secretaries are offered in the narrative comments under Question #28. Many decision-making facets of the training, logistics, and general administrative fields could be competently performed by secretaries. We are aware that each office within the Center has its own unique requirements and responsibilities. The Panel can only make the general recommendation that each supervisor examine the content of the work being performed and, if the secretary is willing, delegate additional responsibilities to the secretary where it can be done appropriately. The distribution of imagery, the preparation of routine reports, and requesting and distributing items from the library for PI's are examples of additional duties that could be performed by secretaries in IEG.

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Another possibility for enhancing the responsibilities of selected secretaries would be to reclassify some secretarial jobs completely or at least change their job titles to more accurately reflect the work done by those individuals. An example and precedent for reclassifying a clerk-typist position was accomplished in Equipment Services Branch, ESD/TSG. A new position was created, incorporating both secretarial and technical skills, with the new job title of Engineering Technician.

f. Reclassifying and/or Retitling of Positions

The Panel suggests that the possibility of reclassifying or retitling and upgrading of two secretarial positions within each Group be examined for feasibility. These positions would be particularly for those secretaries who have reached the top grade of their slots and are most qualified and interested in assuming additional responsibilities. The recognition and prestige of the new positions would hopefully provide a goal for those most willing to work for them.

4. Summary of Recommendations and Conclusions:

- A total of 71% of the respondents either do not have an LOI or do not have a current one. The Panel recommends that LOI's be updated with consideration being given to job enhancement opportunities.
- The IMP recommends that job descriptions of the Center's clericals be reviewed for completeness and accuracy and be updated if necessary. Each clerical should then be provided with a copy of his job description.
- The Panel calls for more cooperation among the secretaries to assure that the workload of his/her Division/Group is more evenly divided.
- The Panel encourages supervisors to determine in what areas they could delegate additional responsibilities to their secretaries as a step to overcoming the significant lack-of-challenge problem.

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- The Panel recommends the reclassifying or retitling and upgrading of two secretarial positions in each Group.

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D. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

1. IMP Overview

In this category the IMP was concerned with the interaction between secretaries and their supervisors, other secretaries, and other co-workers. Specifically, we wanted to examine the attitudes of these groups towards each other. We wanted to determine if the problem of secretaries feeling taken-for-granted and isolated has any foundation. The Panel was also interested in the supervisor-secretary relationship and particularly the secretary's perceptions of how well she/he was being supervised and utilized.

2. Working Relationships - Questions and Responses

Thirteen questions and their responses concerning Working Relationships are presented below.

#29 Select the term(s) which best describe your relationship with your immediate supervisor

professional	<u>44%</u>
formal	<u>10%</u>
strained	<u>8%</u>
casual	<u>36%</u>
adversary	<u>2%</u>
friendly	<u>70%</u>

#30 Do you respect your boss?

YES - 96% NO - 4%

#31 If a problem arises concerning you and/or your work, do you feel comfortable talking to your supervisor about it?

YES - 80% NO - 20%

#32 Do you believe that your boss appreciates the work you do?

YES - 80% NO - 20%

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#33 When you make a decision, do you feel your supervisor trusts your judgment?

Never	<u>24%</u>
Sometimes	<u>31%</u>
Frequently	<u>32%</u>
Always	<u>13%</u>

#34 Do you feel you are properly supervised in your work (i.e. guidance on your performance, corrected for poor work)?

YES - 77%      NO - 23%

#35 Do you see a necessity for a course to train supervisors in the proper and efficient use of a secretary?

YES - 76%      NO - 24%

#36 Do you feel that your supervisor is using you efficiently in your present position?

YES - 67%      NO - 33%

#37 Do you feel your supervisor keeps you informed?

YES - 65%      NO - 35%

#38 As a secretary, how do you feel you are regarded by your co-workers (i.e. section, branch or division personnel)?

Representative responses include:

- as person performing at best level
- competent in my field
- respected and competent
- good
- quite well by some, errand girl by others, source of information by the remaining
- looked down upon
- by supervisors, a secretary; by others a maid, "gofer"
- as a catchall type person with no intelligence

#39 Do your co-workers thank you verbally for doing a good job?

YES - 71%      NO - 29%

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#40 Who causes you the most frustration?

management 38%

working personnel 62%

What is the main source of this frustration?

Representative answers include:

- working personnel
- too many people want to feel important, so who else to start pushing around other than the secretary.
- working personnel, not able to communicate with them
- pettiness in working personnel, they regard secretaries as low-level workers that are beneath them.
- I have a great dislike for this stigma related to secretaries.
- management, NPIC files are not kept up to date
- management, better way sometimes overlooked because little people aren't being heard.

#41 Do you feel taken-for-granted?

YES - 44% NO - 56%

If yes, please explain.

Representative narrative comments include:

- not always informed, makes me feel unimportant
- sometimes boss forgets how difficult it is to deal with managers because he leaves me to fend for myself
- only hear about my work when something is wrong but hardly ever when a job is well done.

### 3. Working Relationships Analysis

In the category of Working Relationships there is really very little of a substantive nature to deal with. Most of the responses are indications of feelings and perceptions. The responses do, however, provide additional context for our understanding of the overall secretarial condition.

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a. Secretary and Supervisor Relationship

In examining the relationship between the supervisor and secretary, it immediately becomes apparent that we do not seem to have a significant problem here. Most of the respondents indicate they have a distinctly positive relationship with their supervisor. It is encouraging to note that 80% of the secretaries feel comfortable talking to their supervisors about personal and/or work-related problems. It is essential that this level of communication be maintained or improved if possible.

Two areas of concern did, however, emerge in the sphere of secretary/supervisor relations. The first area deals with the matter of confidence.

A total of 55% of the secretaries reported feeling that their supervisors trusted their judgment only sometimes or never. In light of what has already been said about the delegation of responsibility and need for clericals to feel that they are really contributing, supervisors must convey to their secretaries a sense of confidence and mutual respect. If a secretary feels she has the support and confidence of her supervisor, she may be encouraged to take more initiative in routine decision-making. The result would be increased office efficiency and the secretary would enjoy a heightened sense of self-esteem.

The second area of concern in the secretary/supervisor relationship involves both communication and confidence. Only 65% of the respondents reported that their supervisors kept them informed. Secretaries are the focal points of their respective offices. They need to be aware of what is going on around them if only to answer the phone intelligently when someone asks where her boss is and when he is expected back. On a more significant level, by keeping his secretary informed, the supervisor provides information the secretary can use to make office-related decisions. The secretary, on her part, will feel that she is a meaningful member of the office team.

We want to comment briefly on an apparent contradiction that emerged in examining the supervisor/secretary relationship. In response to Question #35,

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76% of the secretaries saw a necessity for a course to train supervisors in the proper and efficient use of a secretary. On the other hand, in response to Question #36, 67% of the secretaries felt that their supervisors were using them efficiently. The only explanation appears to be that secretaries hold their own supervisors in higher regard than supervisors/managers as a Group. In reference to the training of supervisors we want to note that OTR, through the Clerical Training Needs Task Force, is considering incorporating sessions into existing supervisory and managerial courses which would specifically address the supervisor/secretary relationship. Provisions for this type of training should also be made in the Center's New Supervisors' Course.

b. Secretary and Co-Worker Relationship

We want to return now to the problems of working relationships around the secretarial field. While there does not seem to be a significant problem between secretaries and their supervisors, we do seem to have a problem between secretaries and their co-workers. In most cases, working personnel cause secretaries the most frustration. This is particularly true in IEG where 78% of the secretaries feel this way. Usually these frustrations are caused by demands that a typing job be done immediately, or the co-workers' writing is illegible. Ultimately it comes down to the problem of taking the secretary for granted and treating her as a subordinate. Simple human relations should dictate that we treat our fellow workers with courtesy and respect.

4. Summary of Recommendations and Conclusions:

- most of the respondents have a distinctly positive relationship with their supervisor.
- many secretaries believe supervisors do not trust the judgment of their secretaries. The Panel encourages supervisors to convey to their secretaries a sense of confidence and mutual respect. We encourage working personnel to exercise restraint and to treat secretaries with consideration, courtesy, and respect.

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- The Panel recommends that supervisors make every effort to keep their secretaries informed on office-related matters.
- The Panel recommends that the Center's New Supervisor's Course include instruction on the proper utilization of clerical employees' skills.

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E. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

1. IMP Overview

In this category the Panel wanted to examine a few of the variables that constitute the working environment of secretaries within the Center. We wanted to consider the physical surroundings as well as some of the less tangible aspects of employment within the Center. The Panel also wanted to determine if the secretaries' perceptions of their work environment were generally favorable or unfavorable.

2. Work Environment - Questions and Responses

The following questions were asked of the secretaries concerning their work environment.

#42 What is the physical set up of your work area?

Secretary has own office	<u>28%</u>
Share office with other secretary(s)	<u>41%</u>
Share office with boss	<u>7%</u>
Other	<u>24%</u>

Which of the above would you prefer?

Secretary has own office	<u>67%</u>
Share office with other secretary(s)	<u>27%</u>
Share office with boss	<u>3%</u>
Other	<u>3%</u>

#43 Are your duty hours flexible?

YES - 78%      NO - 22%

If no, would you like them to be:

YES - 70%      NO - 30%

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#44 Is your office leave policy for secretaries satisfactory?

YES - 93% NO - 7%

If no, why not?

No reasons were given to explain the few negative responses.

#45 Are you required to work during your lunch time?

Often 15%

Frequently 2%

Sometimes 47%

Never 36%

How do you feel about it?

Some narrative comments concerning working during lunch are:

- When I am ready for lunch I am constantly approached with work to be done.
- Dislike sometimes working during lunch time since others are having lunch.
- Never have time to digest lunch
- Doesn't bother me -- ok
- Would expect overtime if done too often

#46 Do you have all the supplies that are necessary to efficiently do your job?

YES - 93% NO - 7%

#47 Are there any changes that you would like to see which would improve your working situation? If yes, explain.

Some of the suggested changes to the working environment are:

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- More individual privacy to eliminate unnecessary interruptions.
- Supervisor should be more orderly. He is messy
- More working space
- Office too cold even in summer, space heater has been stolen.
- Properly working xerox in area
- The cold often makes it very difficult to type
- Cleaner restrooms

3. Work Environment Analysis

With only a few specific exceptions, the working environment of the secretaries does not seem to pose a problem. Flexible duty hours and office leave policies are viewed very favorably by the vast majority of the respondents. While some secretaries do not like periodically working during lunch, most secretaries seem to accept this as part of the job. The overall working environment of the Center appears to be perceived by the secretaries as quite good.

Several specific problems, however, were brought to our attention while looking into the area of the working environment. These problems involve copy machines and restrooms.

a. Copy Machines

While noting that 93% of the secretaries feel they have all the supplies they need to efficiently do their job, many of the respondents stated they need more working copy machines in the work areas. As it is now, lines of secretaries often form behind the few functioning machines they can find. We recognize that copying machines are expensive to buy or rent and maintain. But we must also consider the cost of the inefficiency and frustration the secretary must deal with. Certainly a secretary can be more productively occupied than standing in line waiting to use a copy machine. We suggest that copy machines of sufficient speed and capacity be made available in the work areas where they are needed.

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b. Restroom Sanitation

The second specific problem in the working environment is the lack of cleanliness in the restrooms. The Panel has been informed that the Support Staff is currently working on this problem.

4. Summary of Recommendations and Conclusions:

- The working environment of the secretaries does not seem to pose a problem.
- Flextime and office leave policies are viewed very favorably.
- The Panel recommends that duplicating needs be reevaluated, and sufficient copy machines be distributed to meet the needs of the Center.
- Support Staff is working on the problem of restroom cleanliness.

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F. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

1. IMP Overview

In this category the Panel was primarily interested in the relative career orientation of the Center's secretaries. We wanted to determine how the secretaries viewed themselves within the secretarial career field. Perhaps the most significant area we wanted to examine, however, was whether or not secretarial career development plans had been established by the secretaries and their supervisors.

2. Career Development - Questions and Responses

The Panel asked the respondents the following questions concerning the secretarial career field and career development.

#48 Do you regard the secretarial field as your career field?

YES - 47%      NO - 49%      Don't know - 4%

#49 Would you be interested in transferring to another career field?

YES - 64%      NO - 29%      Don't know - 7%

#50 Would you transfer to another secretary job within the Agency if you could?

YES - 46%      NO - 40%      Don't know - 14%

#51 Have you and your supervisor developed a career plan that includes training, education and/or long range goals?

YES - 14%      NO - 86%

If not, do you feel you need one?

YES - 54%      NO - 46%

#52 Do you feel that NPIC secretaries should go on rotational assignments?

YES - 56%      NO - 44%

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Within the building?

YES - 58%      NO - 42%

To other C.I.A. offices?

YES - 44%      NO - 56%

#53 Do you think the secretarial field in private industry is more appealing than it is here at NPIC?

YES - 42%      NO - 13%      Don't know - 45%

If no, why?

A sample of narrative comments include:

- more security
- more leave

### 3. Career Development Analysis

Some interesting statistics emerged from the Panel's examination of secretarial career development. Of the secretaries who responded to the questionnaire, almost two-thirds indicated they would be interested in transferring to another career field! This figure certainly raises questions about the relative degree of satisfaction derived by our secretaries from their jobs.

In spite of this gloomy appraisal of the secretarial profession, almost half of the secretaries regard the secretarial field as their career field. Perhaps there is some evidence here of a sense of resignation on the part of the secretaries towards their jobs. Many secretaries seem to be saying they are in their current positions by circumstance rather than choice.

#### a. Enhancing Career Field

The Secretarial career field can be attractive, challenging, and rewarding. To reach this level, however, supervisors and co-workers must first demonstrate a genuine concern for the secretary as a valued and productive professional. Apparently this is not the case in much of the Center. This apparent lack of consideration for secretaries as professionals is reflected in the fact that only

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a meager 14% of the respondents have organized, with their supervisors, a career development plan.

The Panel recommends that supervisors take an active interest in coordinating a career development plan with their secretaries. Many types of training and experience-broadening opportunities are available. OTR has a career development profile for clerical personnel which provides course offerings for first, middle, and senior level clericals. In addition to formal training, about half of the respondents indicated that NPIC secretaries should go on rotational assignments both within the Center and throughout the Agency.

4. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations:

- Many secretaries do not enthusiastically view the secretarial field as a career field.
- The Panel recommends that supervisors take an active interest in coordinating a career development plan with their secretaries.

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G. ATTITUDES, MORALE, INTEREST, AND RECOGNITION

1. IMP Overview

The Panel completed its examination of the NPIC secretarial status with the analysis of this subject area.

We were dealing, to a great extent, with perceptions and feelings again. The more abstract questions were included to provide additional background and to increase our understanding of secretaries. We wanted to look in particular at the area of Recognition, as we felt we might have a problem here.

2. Attitudes, Morale, Interest, and Recognition - Questions and Responses

#54 Are you satisfied in your current position?

YES - 53% NO - 47%

#55 In general, how would you rate the position of secretary in NPIC?

Excellent - 5% Fair - 35%

Good - 44% Poor - 16%

#56 What motivates you in your job? (Circle one(s) that apply)

want to keep job - 25% appreciation - 15%

money - 46% responsibility - 40%

like job - 46% recognition - 15%

want to advance - 46% personal satisfaction - 61%

pride - 41% other - 7%

#57 What do you feel the morale is among NPIC secretaries?

How is your morale?

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Most respondents were negative about the morale of NPIC secretaries. For the most part, however, comments were a little more favorable in references to individual morale. Adjectives ranged from "terrible" to "high".

#58 What do you feel are the two most prevalent reasons you attribute to secretaries leaving positions in NPIC?

Typical responses included:

- not considered professional
- opportunities for promotions are limited
- not interesting
- want to get away from the stigma a secretary carries.
- you can only go to GS-06 in Branch, GS-07 in Division, and GS-08 in Group.
- boredom with duties
- lack of work
- lack of responsibility
- slot not high enough for work being done
- switch to professional job
- decide to stay with family

#59 Do you feel that your pay is adequate, not enough, or too much for the work you do?

adequate	- <u>55%</u>
not enough	- <u>45%</u>
too much	- <u>0%</u>

#60 Have you ever received a formal Letter of Appreciation?

YES - 31%

a QSI?

YES - 8%

#61 What ways other than promotions, Q.S.I.'s , and Letters of Appreciation do you feel would be meaningful to you as recognition for superior job performance?

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- verbal "Thank You" and show of appreciation
- more responsibility
- remembering special occasions such as birthday, and secretary's week.
- cash award for sustained superior performance

#62 Would you be interested in participating in the activities of a secretarial association within the Center?

YES - 72%      NO - 22%      Don't know - 6%

3. Attitudes, Morale, Interest and Recognition Analysis

The results of this portion of the questionnaire were, to a great extent, inconclusive. We concede that several questions were imprecise, loaded with value judgments, and, therefore, subject to a wide range or interpretation. This wide latitude provided a forum, however, for many of the respondents to candidly express themselves. Much of this free expression was negative in content, particularly relating to morale and prevalent reasons for leaving NPIC.

a. Morale

In the discussion of morale, apparently anything less than high morale was considered an indication of low morale. This essentially negative frame of reference, particularly in the respondents collective view of themselves, produced a bleak picture of NPIC secretaries. Fortunately, many secretaries feel that their individual morale is good when compared to their perception of secretaries' morale in general.

It was interesting to note that most of the reasons given for leaving NPIC also seemed to be controlled by the secretaries negative frame of reference. In most cases, the secretaries indicated they were, for one reason or another, moving away from a negative situation at NPIC rather than being drawn toward a more positive opportunity elsewhere. Pregnancy, a common reason for secretaries leaving the Center, was not mentioned at all. This is not to say that many of the reasons cited for leaving

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the Center are not valid. Most of the reasons have been presented earlier in this report as problem areas. It is the apparent preoccupation with the negative, the matter of degree, that is disturbing.

While most of the narrative responses to questions in this category were negative, the responses to questions involving a simple choice were at worst, mixed. About half of the secretaries indicated they were satisfied with their current positions. Again, about half of the respondents rated the position of secretary at NPIC as either Excellent or Good. Perhaps this inconsistency in responses indicates the common attitude, to some extent, that people like to let off steam occasionally and, therefore, the narrative responses are necessarily an accurate reflection of peoples' true feelings.

The Panel's evaluation of motivation revealed several interesting points. A surprising 61% of the respondents indicated personal satisfaction as a motivator in their jobs. When considering the many secretarial problem areas already noted, and the other possible responses provided in the question, it seems contradictory that personal satisfaction should be so highly rated.

b. Recognition

On the other end of the scale, the Panel found it disturbing that Appreciation and Recognition were cited by only 15% of the respondents as motivating factors. The Panel suggests the reason Appreciation and Recognition were not cited more often is that secretaries within the Center receive very little of this type of reinforcement.

Certainly pay is one essential form of reward for performing a job, but psychological needs must also be satisfied. The Panel suggests that supervisors and co-workers of secretaries make a sincere effort to be more sensitive to these needs. A simple "Thank You" will go a long way. Letters of Appreciation, Commendations, and Quality Step Increases are tangible expressions of recognition for deserving secretaries. Perhaps the highest level of recognition for all secretaries would be

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their acceptance, by both supervisors and co-workers, as co-professionals.

c. Interest in Secretarial Association

A group awareness is emerging among the Center's secretarial personnel. A large majority of the secretaries indicated an interest in participating in the activities of a secretarial association within the Center. The NPIC Clerical Working Group provides the opportunity for secretaries to become involved in matters directly relating to their profession. The Imagery Management Panel recommends that all secretaries take advantage of this opportunity to participate in the NPIC Clerical Working Group.

4. Summary of Recommendations and Conclusions

- The results of this category were to a large extent, inconclusive.
- Secretaries seem to have a negative frame of reference in relation to their jobs.
- Appreciation and Recognition were cited by only 15% of the respondents as motivating factors in their jobs.
- The IMP suggests that supervisors and co-workers of secretaries make a sincere effort to be more sensitive to the psychological needs of secretaries.
- We recommend that the Center encourage all clericals to participate in the activities of the NPIC Clerical Working Group.